

## This is the final report from the Students' Union for the academic year 22/23, time flies when you are having fun!

**Current President Mollie Hehir will leave her post on the 30<sup>th</sup> June** after two inspiring and impactful years in the role. The brilliant news is that she has **secured a position working for Kingswood residential and outdoor activity centre on an 'outdoor activity instructor' apprenticeship**. Kingswood were impressed with the wealth of experience Mollie has especially considering her age, **they also took into account that she had completed outdoor adventure whilst participating and completing her bronze and silver DofE Awards and that she passed a youth work diploma whilst working full time**.

She said: *"The last 2 years have been the best of my life, I have learned so much, met so many great people and experienced new things. I took many leaps out of my comfort zone but that has led me to where I am now"*.

**Yet again another President who will move onto an exciting chosen career in a field of their choice.**



More exciting news is that student Governor and current Vice President Finance **Jack Stokes was able to persuade 369 students to vote for him to become the next Students Union President**. Students were interested in Jacks manifesto pledges around mental health, equality and inclusion, access to student services and union reform.

He said:

*"After 3 years of dedicated service to students, I am so excited to have been elected to serve as The Students' Union President 2023-24. I am looking forward to working with students, the SU Staff team and the college to improve student experience and making the college a better place to study. I promise to fight for all students and service will be at the bedrock of my Presidency"*.

See his manifesto and person statement here <https://www.dudleysu.co.uk/jackstokes>

Continuing in the theme of SU people success stories we have **current apprentice but soon to be full time employee, in a split job role between the AoC and Dudley College, Aldrich Gonsalves**.

Aldrich has been working extremely hard over the last 18 months to complete his apprenticeship in Youth Social Action (YSA) which was fully funded by the Pears Foundation. **The AoC felt the project was so successful that they created a legacy project for graduating apprentices to train in mentoring and take on the role of YSA coach and mentor**. This means Aldrich will continue to be able to work with the SU but will all mentor 2 apprentices in other colleges



and support 10 West Midlands colleges to run YSA projects. There were only 5 YSA apprentices appointed nationally and only 3 have been able to secure continued employment with the AoC. See more about the project here:

<https://www.aoc.co.uk/corporate-services/projects/pears-iwill-youth-social-action-apprenticeship-project>

*Aldrich said: "Youth social action can play a role in 'character education', an important aspect of Ofsted's inspection criteria for both schools and colleges. Over the year, while working with students on youth social action projects, the main noticeable change was how much confidence and improved skills the students gained. I love my role as YSA which builds young people's character and demonstrates a significant, positive impact on young people and society. I was lucky enough to have the support of the SU which gave me an excellent insight into YSA prior to becoming an apprentice, now I will pay back and provide quality YSA projects alongside colleagues in the SU"*

### **Trips, events, clubs and activities over the last term...**

Since last term we have taken students to **London Parliament** for a tour and sightseeing trip, organised charity adventure to **Scafell Pike**, sold out on our annual end of year **Blackpool Pleasure Beach** trip, represented at **Birmingham Pride Community event**, attended **Harrogate** to represent Dudley students at the National Union of Students (NUS) annual conference and similarly attended **Blackpool** to continue to fight the case for progressive campaigns at the NUS liberation conference.

We've also hosted activities linked to some of our clubs.

We Socialise Too! SEND club continues to socialise with trips to the **Black Country Living Museum** and **Dudley Zoo**. And the SU Football Club participated in **Ramadan Football** an event organised by Aldrich. More information on that activity can be found in this case study [Ramadan Football Tournament](#)



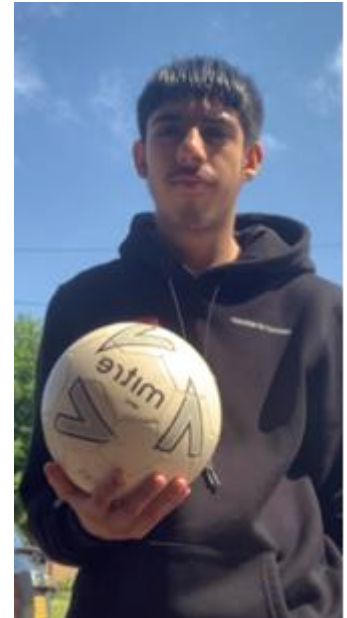
**Over the full academic year we've hosted 9 cross college trips that any student could attend offering 360 places.** Offering these recreational trips allows students to meet new people and make friends, go to places they may not otherwise be able to afford or get to and develops a sense of wider student community.

We're proud of being able to offer such a diverse range of opportunities but must stress it is a lot of hard work and dedication from the team to pull them off in a safe, sustainable, and timely way.

## Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging work...

As mentioned above we were able to organise and host a **Ramadan football tournament** during April. It was not just a sporting event, but also an **opportunity to raise awareness about Islamophobia and educate participants about the physical and mental effects of fasting.**

Shaoib Iqbal (Shabs), Dudley College student, headed up the project with his team mates from the recreational football club he plays with at the College. He said ***'I was so happy that I could share part of my faith with my teammates. They respected what I had to say about Ramadan and about how it can impact on mental health because sometimes people haven't respected me about it. In the past people have teased me with food and said bad things about my faith. But I'm older now and I've got good respectful people around me, especially my football lads. I'm so happy to have been able to work with Aldrich to get this project done and shared with so many people.'***



This activity **allowed students to develop practical skills like event organisation, negotiation, and problem-solving.** It was truly embedded into the students' lives, giving them a **platform to promote their faith,** learn about the challenges of organising a major event, and **foster a spirit of camaraderie and friendly competition.**

**The Union once again attended Pride,** however this year as the college committed to take students on the parade, we decided to attend the **Friday evening community event.** The Friday event allows for those who would struggle with the crowds and noise of a parade to **enjoy the atmosphere of Pride and celebrate but without inducing anxiety and was particularly more suitable for our neurodivergent students.** The opportunity was available to all students and we met 2 new people for the first time who had never participated in Union activity.



**Four Union officers and Vice Presidents attended the NUS Liberation conference.** They spoke about their own identities and shared **stories of their struggles, discrimination faced, what impacts students lives** and collectively how they can tackle these challenges.

As a union we had submitted policy prior to the conference, and this was chosen to be debated. **The policy was about accessibility and accessible institutions.** This policy, after some revisions by other delegates, has now been voted on and passed which means it **mandates work of the national liberation officers** this coming year.



**The SU were proud to be asked to support the end of year awards for the ESOL department,** this held particular significance for Aldrich, who made a speech at the event, as this was his first curriculum area when joining the college. **SU volunteers hosted activities for the attendees which included 'where in the world'** using a map students could pin their photo to their country and a handprint activity with positive messages in students native language.

### Special mention for the Duke of Edinburgh awards...

Sophia (Student Development Officer) was **very pleasantly surprised and pleased to be nominated to attend the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Gold Awards at Buckingham Palace** back in April. She has been the Award Manager at Dudley College for over 10 years and was nominated by her regional operations manager.

Whilst she was there she had the **opportunity to meet up with Gold participant Noah Griffiths** who was there to receive his certification and broach. **See Noahs story here: [My DofE Journey \(dudleysu.co.uk\)](http://dudleysu.co.uk)** Noah has secured a position in the Navy but has promised that on any leave he'll support the award at Dudley in any way possible. He said *"Thank you so much for your, Darryll and the rest of the SU support in helping me complete my Gold Award, I wouldn't have been able to do it without you!"*.



**Although Mollie will be moving on, she is committed to completing her final DofE award at Gold Level** (completing Bronze and Silver with the college) she'll be doing this with DofE direct. She has also secured the **coveted position of DofE National Ambassador**. She is the **first student** they have had who has come from a **Further Education College**.

Aldrich has written a **case study for DofE** which has been picked up by their marketing team which will be **featured in their national promotions!** He **will be training as a DofE young leader** during their next intake and is looking forward to taking up the challenge.

**The award can be expensive** but at the college we aim to keep it as **accessible to everyone** as possible. The **SU were successful in securing a small funding bid of £500** which will be allocated to participants so they are able to purchase essential (but often expensive) kit for their upcoming expedition.

Claire Shea-Simonds - Further Education UK Development Manager said:

*'We are thrilled to be able to support Dudley College participants through our Resilience Fund to help ensure that as many young people as possible are able to benefit from the life changing opportunities provided by participation in DofE. It's also great to see Dudley College students engage so fully with both our Young Leaders and Ambassador programmes, with the support of their dedicated staff volunteers and leaders. We look forward to supporting Dudley College as it continues grow it's DofE programme.'*



## Tackling issues that make a difference to our students...

As many are aware **the Union continues to do as much as it can to support students during this cost of living crisis**. To hosting and distributing the **period product scheme**, to selling **Totum cards** which save students (and staff) lots of money to providing a **free pass approved age ID card in association with trading standards** - we are doing what we can to make a difference. We also have a small number of refurbished laptops we loan to students who cannot access the college scheme.

The SU have also committed to **raising money for the student nominated charity Black Country Mental Health**. We have requested donations from the college community of books, DVDs and CDs which we then have been selling on in the college community for 50p per item. We've so far sold over 100 items and its proving to be a real success as well as being a **great sustainable recycling activity**.

**We have of course also been providing value for money trips, activities and events for students.**

We've been **supporting the campaign to save Dudley libraries** and have added our name to the official supporters list. We have promoted the campaign to make students aware of the threat to local libraries, **collected signatures** and attended online campaign planning meetings and **supported students to have the confidence to go to the lobby** which took place outside Dudley Council house. Some students were even **brave enough to take to the mic** to tell the crowd the difference libraries make to them.



### Over the Summer and Future work...

**Although the summer is coming the SU will remain open and busy.**

There is a **summer scheme of 3 trips arranged for SEND students** to attend. **Duke of Edinburgh** participants will be **training** for and attending their **expedition**. **Students4Trees children's holiday camp** will take place as well as an additional holiday activity for children who identify as LGBTQ+, these activities will involve **lots of student volunteers**. **Freshers preparations** are well underway with plans to once again tour campuses in September. We will be finalising on a **new scheme** we are supporting the college with next academic year for **'eco ambassadors'** and **working alongside Colleges West Midlands on a sustainability project** And we'll of course **be inducting a new President** – Jack Stokes! We may also close for a few weeks to take a holiday 😊

As ever **We hope this report highlights to the Corporation the vital work DSU continue to do in supporting Dudley College and our member students.**

*Further insights will be expanded on via a verbal update at the Corporation meeting.*